

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

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MITT ROMNEY
GOVERNOR

KERRY HEALEY
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

April 12, 2006

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives:

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 5 of Article 63 of the Amendments to the Constitution, I am today signing House Bill No. 4479, "An Act Providing Access to Affordable, Quality, Accountable Health Care."

With the signing this law today, every resident will have health insurance by 2009. An achievement like this comes around once in a generation, and it proves that government can work when people of both parties reach across the aisle for the common good. Today, Massachusetts is leading the way with health insurance for everyone, without a government takeover and without raising taxes.

By allowing insurers greater flexibility to design and offer more consumer responsive health insurance products and by remedying market breakdowns by merging the small group and non-group markets, this law will substantially reduce the average monthly premium for individuals and small businesses. In order to simplify the offer and purchase of insurance, especially by small businesses, the law creates a new independent authority call the insurance Commonwealth Care Health Insurance Connector Authority. The Connector will offer a choice of comprehensive, good value health insurance products to individuals and to small businesses for purchase on a pre-tax basis.

For those residents of the Commonwealth who do not qualify for Medicaid, but do not earn enough annual income to purchase health insurance on their own, this law will provide Commonwealth Care, a sliding scale premium assistance program for the purchase of private health insurance. With the creation of Commonwealth Care, every resident of the Commonwealth will be able to buy health insurance according to their means.

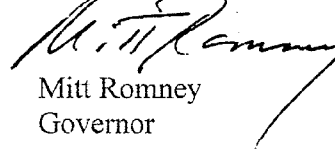
Because this law will result in a greater availability of affordable health insurance products and subsidies will be provided to the working poor, it is fair to expect that all Massachusetts residents have health insurance by July 1, 2007. No longer can individuals free ride by seeking healthcare and expecting society to bear the cost.

Lastly, but perhaps most critically, this bill takes bold steps to contain healthcare costs. By putting an end to cost-shifting from the uninsured and from the Medicaid program, businesses and individual will no longer bear the cost of others' healthcare. This bill places critical healthcare cost and quality information in the hands of businesses and consumers. By creating cost and quality transparency, individuals will make more informed decisions about where and how to seek care.

In addition, I am vetoing in their entirety those sections of House 4479 itemized in Attachment A of this message, for the reasons set forth in that attachment.

The remainder of the bill I hereby approve.

Respectfully submitted,



Mitt Romney
Governor